

M&O  
Serials  
QL 671  
.G84

# THE MONTHLY



# GULL

BLAIR HARRIS TAYLOR

JUL 6 - 1937

ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
NUMBER 7

VOLUME 19

SAN FRANCISCO, JULY, 1937

## Sears Point Toll Road Birds

The Sears Point Toll Road skirts the north shore of the San Pablo Bay for a distance of seven miles. The western terminal of the road is the bridge crossing Napa Slough at its mouth. The eastern terminal is the bridge crossing the Napa River at a point immediately north of Vallejo and Mare Island. The marsh land between these two bridges is known as Island No. 1. The road lies wholly in Solano County. As shooting is prohibited along the highway a splendid opportunity is afforded to those interested in birds to observe many species at close range on the sloughs and ponds along this road.

On January 31, 1937, the undersigned spent three hours, from 10 a. m. to 1 p. m., making observations from our automobile of the birds in this marsh area. The sky was partly clouded but the sun was shining most of the time. We were equipped with a pair of Navy field glasses and a 25-power telescope, and identified some birds a distance of a quarter mile from the road. The following species were observed, the number of birds in large flocks being estimated:

Western Grebe 2; Pied-billed Grebe 6; Herring Gull 12; Western Gull 700; California Gull 900; Short-billed Gull 200; Bonaparte Gull 85; White Pelican (in air) 12; Mallard 9; Green-winged Teal 18; Shoveller 350; Pintail 23; Canvas-back 1250; Scaup 30; Buffle-head 120; Ruddy Duck 2000; Hutchins Goose (in air) 55; California Heron 24; American Egret 14; Brewster Egret 5; Black-crowned Night Heron 1; American Coot 1400; Avocet 55; Long-billed Dowitcher 32; Red-backed Sandpiper 40; Western Sandpiper 24; Marbled Godwit 35; Greater Yellow-legs 6; Western Willet 3; Long-billed Curlew 10; Black-bellied Plover 60; Killdeer 3; Turkey Vulture 1; White-tailed Kite 1; Marsh Hawk 10; Sparrow Hawk 2; Short-eared Owl 6; Red-shafted Flicker 1; San Francisco Red-wing 8; Western Meadowlark 125; Brewer Blackbird 75; House Finch 45; Willow Goldfinch 60; Savannah Sparrow 20; Nuttall Sparrow 15; Song Sparrow 70; Shrike 2; Salt-marsh Yellow-throat 3; Suisun Marsh Wren 4; Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1; Pipit 16.

The White-tailed Kite was perched on a small "no hunting" sign in the marsh. When disturbed at the stopping of the car it flew to another perch of the same kind farther along.

The Brewster Egrets have just recently appeared in this area, and the points in which they differ from the larger and commoner American Egrets were noted with much interest by us; especially did we note the black bill of the Brewster and the odd contrast of yellow toes on black feet.

Emerson A. Stoner and J. Duncan Graham, Benicia, Calif. February 4, 1937.



## Rainy Day Observations from a San Francisco Home

San Franciscans have not experienced for some time such a steady down-pour as we had on Sunday, March 21, 1937. One would hardly believe that such a day would or could be replete with interesting observations of bird life. How-

ever, from early morning to late evening at the writer's home located on the southeast corner of Filbert and Lyon Streets, eighteen different species were identified and certain characteristics noted.

Using the roof of the garage for a feeding place bread crumbs, suet and bird seed attracted in the early morning, first, the Hermit Thrush, who generally makes his appearance immediately after the electric light is turned on. He hopped onto the roof from a nearby tree, looked into the window, made his little bow and then proceeded with his breakfast. In him we have a dignified, inquisitive, fearless little friend. Next in order came the Nuttall Sparrows, suspicious in attitude and a bit quarrelsome among themselves, but they seem to recognize the dignity and fearlessness of the thrush, who confines himself, as a rule, to one part of the roof, leaving the remaining space for any other visitor. Then followed the Fox Sparrow, not quarrelsome by nature, with confidence in man and unafraid of any other member of the feathered tribe. He proceeded quietly with his meal, during which some English Sparrows appeared. To my surprise and satisfaction, none of the others made way for the newcomers. Finally, came several Juncos, and all seemed to have plenty of room, for no quarrels were engaged in; nevertheless, the Fox Sparrow held the center of the stage without being molested.

On two occasions recently, March 12th and 14th, after breakfast, no doubt, as a reward for a plentiful morning meal, the Fox Sparrow burst into song, amply repaying me for my food and efforts.

While I was watching from our third story window, an Allen Hummingbird darted from tree to tree. A "high-pitched, wheezy note" announced that Pine Siskins were in the immediate vicinity and looking downward into our garden I saw some twenty feeding upon the ground, picking seeds, and with them were two Green-backed Goldfinches. All of a sudden these birds darted into a nearby Japanese plum tree and looking upward for the cause of the alarm I noted a Sparrow Hawk, which apparently was in a playful mood and wanted to see what effect his sudden approach would have. He did not alight so the Siskins and Finches quickly overcame their fear and went back to feeding upon the ground.

A Ruby-crowned Kinglet came into view moving rapidly from twig to twig and bush to bush. On several occasions his scarlet crown patch was plainly visible. Occasionally the Song Sparrow would enliven the day with his beautiful little melody.

From time to time the wild call of the Flicker helped make an eventful day. Two Lutescent Warblers were seen in the neighboring garden and the House Finch was frequently in evidence, both in view and song.

Toward evening a Robin flew to the top of a neighboring house and sang joyously for some time while the downpour continued. The philosophy of this bird which enables him to sing during the downpour, giving vent to his joy of living and apparently indifferent to wind and rain, is quite a contrast to human beings protected by steam-heated homes and apartments, restless for being indoors, nevertheless not willing to hazard the risks of walking in the rain. Which has a better understanding of the elements?

During the afternoon the peculiar "zee" sound of a Waxwing was heard coming from a Japanese plum tree in a neighboring yard, but for some time the writer was unable to locate this visitant. However, after watching intently and observing closely, a movement was noted and it was the Waxwing sheltering himself from the rain. It remained quietly for perhaps half an hour, then suddenly darted upward and away in an easterly direction. It was a lone bird, but on the previous day a flock of about fifty were seen winging their way westward toward the Presidio. Probably this one strayed from the flock.

Two other species seen were the Audubon Warbler and our kindly disposed, intimate little friend, the Chickadee. Throughout the entire day the ever-fascinating sight of the gulls soaring into the air currents, first upwards, then downwards and vice versa, and then to the right and to the left, furnished an endless source of delight. All in all, an interesting and eventful day for a bird enthusiast.

Joseph J. Webb, San Francisco, California. March 24, 1937.

## Field Trip

The June field trip was taken on the 13th from Ross, Marin County. Those who drove across the Golden Gate Bridge arrived first and those who went by ferry had to use both train and bus on account of a wreck of a freight train which had not been cleared off the tracks.

The early arrivals drove to the Del Mesa tract to see a pair of Chats thought to be nesting in a thicket of broom in a private garden which Mrs. Courtright had reported. Almost immediately we heard the song, joyous and exhilarated and for range of tones and rapid variations equal if not superior to that of the Mockingbird. While we were trying hard to discover the exact location from where all these notes were being hurled, some of us saw a flash of brilliant yellow and the dashing denizen of the woods was gone. Chats are rare in Marin County and this fleeting contact was indeed a treat.

Returning to Ross we started on the walk. Mrs. Bello showed us an abandoned nest of a Cassin Vireo. Unfortunately the birds had built their nest rather low and where it was easily seen. A small boy had pulled the branch down to look in the nest and on letting it go suddenly two of the three occupants were tossed out upon the ground. Although they were replaced in the nest the parent birds deserted and the youngsters perished.

A pair of Western Flycatchers were occupying their old nest of last year at the school house. A Robin's nest and a Bush-tit's nest in nearby trees were seen which had done service this season. The nest of an Ash-throated Flycatcher was discovered in the stump of an old tree.

After we had passed Phoenix Lake the conversation turned to Spotted Owls. As we reached the likely location all were craning their necks and searching every tree, but apparently we were not to be rewarded. All of a sudden we heard the confident voice of Miss Papina, "Here it is!" This is the third consecutive year that Miss Papina had located this species for us.

This trip isn't complete without the song of the Monterey Hermit Thrush, and as before we heard it far down in the wooded canyon.

Returning to the picnic grounds near Phoenix Lake, thirteen remained to enjoy supper under the trees.

Forty-six species were seen, as follows:

|                         |                        |                             |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Pied-billed Grebe       | Barn Swallow           | Black-throated Gray Warbler |
| California Heron        | Nicasio Jay            | Long-tailed Chat            |
| Turkey Vulture          | Crow                   | Pileolated Warbler          |
| Red-tailed Hawk         | Nicasio Chickadee      | Meadowlark                  |
| Sparrow Hawk            | Plain Titmouse         | Black-headed Grosbeak       |
| Quail                   | Coast Bush-tit         | Lazuli Bunting              |
| Band-tailed Pigeon      | Ruddy Wren-tit         | Purple Finch                |
| Spotted Owl             | Western Robin          | House Finch                 |
| Anna Hummingbird        | Monterey Hermit Thrush | Pine Siskin                 |
| Allen Hummingbird       | Russet-backed Thrush   | Green-backed Goldfinch      |
| Red-shafted Flicker     | Western Bluebird       | San Francisco Towhee        |
| California Woodpecker   | Cassin Vireo           | Brown Towhee                |
| Ash-throated Flycatcher | Warbling Vireo         | Junco                       |
| Western Flycatcher      | Lutescent Warbler      | Chipping Sparrow            |
| Violet-green Swallow    | Yellow Warbler         | Song Sparrow                |
| Rough-winged Swallow    |                        |                             |

Seventeen members attended the trip: Mr. and Mrs. Stephens; Mesdames Bello, Courtright, Kelly; Misses Berg, Cohen, Gallagher, Kennedy, MacIver, McConnell, Papina; Messrs. Andrews, Fennell, Power; Masters Erwin Berliner and Harold Kirker; with six guests: Mrs. Collins; Misses Blake, Collins, Dodga, Schmidt and Mr. Kaye.

## Audubon Notes

**July Meeting:** The regular meeting will be held on Thursday, the 8th, at 8 p. m., room 19, Ferry Building.

The speaker of the evening will be Dr. Adele Grant, whose subject will be "Economic Value of Hawks and Owls in California."

Members may bring guests.



**July Field Trip** will be taken on Sunday, the 11th, in San Francisco. Meet at the end of the Municipal car "C" line, where party will form at 10 o'clock and walk along the water's edge, taking in Land's End, Cliff House and continuing on to Golden Gate Park. Mrs. Stephens, leader.



**June Meeting:** The 238th regular meeting was held on the 10th, in room 19, Ferry Building, twenty-nine members and guests present. President Junea W. Kelly presiding.

Mr. Chester M. Fennell of San Francisco was elected to membership.

The following observations were reported:

Erwin Berliner: Lake Merced, May 28th, Cinnamon Teal.

Commander Parmenter: Moss Landing, May 19th, Forster, Least, Common and Caspian Terns; Monterey, Glaucous Gull, all white plumage, seen on the shore spreading his wings so there was no mistake as to the color of the primaries.

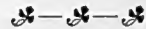
Mr. Webb: North Lake, Golden Gate Park, May 23rd, Anthony Green Heron;

Corral Hollow, Alameda County, Least Vireo's nest and young. The young were banded by Robert Taylor.

Miss Werner: Presidio, June 1st, Chipping Sparrow, an unusual record for San Francisco.



**Membership** for the remainder of 1937 is \$1.50. This includes subscription to the monthly bulletin, THE GULL, six field trips and six lectures.



Mr. F. M. Jencks reports seeing two male and one female Lawrence Goldfinches feeding on Amsinckia nutlets near the Berkeley Country Club in Contra Costa County, May 29th.



### Restoring the Sage Hen

Among the vanishing species which Government naturalists are seeking to protect and rehabilitate is the Sage Hen. Once so plentiful that it formed a principal food staple in the diet of the pioneers and frontiersmen crossing the prairies, the bird is now alarmingly rare. At the Lava Beds National Monument, California, the National Park Service, in co-operation with the United States Biological Survey, is seeking to re-introduce it.

Sage Hens were indigenous to this region until quite recently, when the draining of a lake and the drought accompanying the past few summers disastrously interfered with their continued existence.

## Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

### For the Study and the Protection of Birds

|                              |                          |                                   |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| President.....               | Mrs. G. Earle Kelly..... | 1311 Grand Ave., Alameda, Calif.  |
| Corresponding Secretary..... | C. B. Lastreto.....      | 260 California St., San Francisco |
| Treasurer.....               | Mrs. A. B. Stephens..... | 1695 Filbert St., San Francisco   |

Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 P. M., Room 19, Ferry Building.

Address Bulletin correspondence to Mrs. A. B. Stephens, Editor, 1695 Filbert St., San Francisco.

Membership dues, payable January 1st, \$3.00 per year.

Student memberships, \$1.50 per year.

Life memberships, \$50.00.

Members are responsible for dues until written notice of resignation is received by Treasurer.